

Our ref: 10976P4.WO\CMB.ms

Your ref:

Date: 26 May 2004

**BY FACSIMILE AND POST**

European Patent Office  
International Preliminary  
Examination Section  
D-80298  
Munich  
GERMANY

Dear Sirs

**International Patent Application No GB03/00921**  
**Reckitt Benckiser N.V.**

This letter is in response to the Written Opinion dated 26 January 2004 to which a response is due by 26 May 2004.

Please delete current pages, 13, 14, 15 and 16 in favour of replacement pages 13, 14 and 15. For the convenience of the Examiner a manuscript amended version of former pages 13 to 16 is also enclosed.

**Lack of Unity**

In the Written Opinion the Examiner raised an objection on the ground of lack of unity and also raised objections against each of the allegedly separate inventions.

New claim 1 is based upon a combination of previous claim 1 and previous claims 12 and 13. With this amendment it is submitted that the objection of lack of unity, as well as the patentability objections raised against the separate inventions is addressed.

Yours faithfully  
RECKITT BENCKISER plc

Craig M Bowers

Encs

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Claims

1. Device for receiving and holding a plurality of unit doses of a detergent composition and for individually dispensing the unit doses into an automatic dishwashing machine over a plurality of washing cycles, wherein the device comprises

- (i) a housing adapted to receive the plurality of unit doses, each separately contained in a compartment of a plate, the unit doses being arranged along the circumference thereof;
- (ii) means for opening a compartment or for ejecting a unit dose therefrom; and
- (iii) means to allow access of wash liquor to the unit dose contained in the opened compartment or ejected therefrom, within a controlled time period to allow dissolution of the unit dose into wash liquor of the machine.

2. Device according to claim 1, wherein a holding pocket is provided to receive and hold the unit dose when ejected from the compartment, and means to control the access of wash liquor to said holding pocket.

3. Device according to claim 1, wherein the access of wash liquor to the unit dose (2;2'), when retained in

3 the opened compartment, is via a passageway, the  
device having means to controllably open and close the  
passageway.

4. Device according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the holding  
pocket or passageway is provided with a hinged or  
10 sliding door.

5. Device according to any of the preceding claims,  
wherein the access of wash liquor to the unit dose  
retained in the opened compartment or ejected  
therefrom is controlled by means reactive to a  
15 condition reached during the washing cycle of the  
machine.

6. Device according to claim 5, wherein the access of  
wash liquor to the unit dose retained in the opened  
compartment or ejected therefrom is controlled by  
20 means reactive to the temperature of the wash liquor.

7. Device according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the  
access of wash liquor to the unit dose retained in the  
opened compartment or ejected therefrom is time  
controlled.

25 8. Device according to any of the preceding claims,  
wherein the means for ejecting the unit dose from the  
compartment comprises an ejector acting on a face of  
the compartment.

5 9. Device according to any of claims 1 to 7, wherein the  
means for opening the compartment comprises a piercing  
or cutting means to penetrate a wall of the  
compartment.

10 10. Device according to any of the preceding claims,  
being adapted to be a portable, preferably self-  
standing, device.

11. Device according to any of the preceding claims,  
wherein the unit dose is a detergent or detergent  
additive tablet.

15 12. Blister pack according to any of claims 1 to 10,  
wherein the unit dose is a detergent or detergent  
additive gel.

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Claims

1. Device for receiving and holding a plurality of unit doses of a detergent composition ~~and/or additive~~ and for individually dispensing ~~said~~ <sup>the</sup> unit doses into an automatic dishwashing machine over a plurality of washing cycles, wherein the device comprises

- (i) a housing ~~(10, 10')~~ adapted to receive <sup>the</sup> said plurality of unit doses, ~~(2, 2')~~ each separately contained in a ~~package or compartment thereof~~ ~~(4, 5, 4', 5')~~ of a plate, <sup>the unit doses being arranged along the circumference thereof;</sup>
- 15 (ii) means ~~(19, 19')~~ for opening ~~said package or~~ <sup>a</sup> compartment ~~(4, 5, 4', 5')~~ or for at least partly ejecting ~~said unit dose~~ ~~(2, 2')~~ therefrom; and
- (iii) means ~~(21, 21')~~ to allow access of water <sup>the</sup> or wash liquor to ~~said unit dose~~ ~~(2, 2')~~ contained in the opened ~~package or compartment~~ ~~(4, 5, 4', 5')~~, or ejected therefrom, within a controlled time period after opening thereof to allow dissolution of the unit dose into ~~the water or~~ wash liquor of the machine.

25 2. Device according to claim 1, wherein a holding pocket ~~(20, 20')~~ is provided to receive and hold <sup>the</sup> said unit dose ~~(2, 2')~~ <sup>when</sup> ~~is~~ ejected from the ~~package or~~ compartment ~~(4, 5, 4', 5')~~, and means ~~(21, 21')~~ to

5     ~~control~~ <sup>ably</sup> open and close the access of ~~water or~~  
wash liquor to said holding pocket.

3. Device according to claim 1, wherein the access of  
~~water or~~ wash liquor to <sup>the</sup> said unit dose (2; 2'), ~~if~~ <sup>when</sup>  
~~contained~~ <sup>retained</sup> in the opened package or compartment (4, 5;  
10     ~~4, 5~~), is accomplished <sup>via</sup> by a passageway ~~between the~~  
~~interior of the machine and the opened package or~~  
~~compartment,~~ <sup>the</sup> said device having means to controllably  
open and close <sup>the</sup> said passageway.

4. Device according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the holding  
15     pocket or passageway is provided with a hinged or  
sliding door ~~(21, 21')~~.

5. Device according to any of the preceding claims,  
wherein the access of ~~water or~~ wash liquor to <sup>the</sup> ~~said~~  
~~unit dose (2, 2')~~ <sup>retained</sup> contained in the opened package or  
20     compartment (4, 5, ~~4, 5~~) or ejected therefrom is  
controlled by means reactive to a condition reached  
during the washing cycle of the machine.

6. Device according to claim 5, wherein the access of  
~~water or~~ wash liquor to <sup>the</sup> ~~said~~ unit dose (2, 2')  
~~contained~~ <sup>retained</sup> in the opened package or compartment (4, 5;  
25     ~~4, 5~~) or ejected therefrom is controlled by means  
~~(27, 27')~~ reactive to the ~~specific~~ temperature of the  
wash liquor.

- 5 7. Device according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the  
access of ~~water~~ or wash liquor to said unit dose ~~(2,~~  
~~2-)~~ <sup>retained</sup> ~~contained~~ in the opened ~~package~~ or compartment ~~(4,~~  
~~5, 4-)~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~5-)~~ or ejected therefrom is time controlled.
- 10 8. Device according to any of the preceding claims,  
wherein ~~said~~ <sup>the</sup> means for ejecting the unit dose ~~(2, 2-)~~  
from ~~said~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~package~~ or compartment ~~(4, 5, 4-)~~ <sup>5-)</sup>  
comprises an ejector ~~(19, 19-)~~ <sup>acting</sup> to act on ~~a~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~least one~~  
face of ~~said~~ ~~package~~ or compartment.
- 15 9. Device according to any of claims 1 to 7, wherein ~~said~~ <sup>the</sup>  
means for opening ~~said~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~package~~ or compartment ~~(4, 5,~~  
~~4-)~~ <sup>5-)</sup> comprises a piercing or cutting means to  
penetrate <sup>a wall</sup> ~~at least one~~ of the ~~package~~ or compartment  
walls.
- 20 ~~10. Device according to any of the preceding claims,~~  
wherein said housing (10; 10-) is adapted to receive a  
blister pack (1; 1-) comprising said plurality of unit  
~~doses (2, 2-).~~
- 25 11. Device according to any of the preceding claims,  
being adapted to be a portable, preferably self-  
standing, device.
- ~~12. Blister pack for use with a device according to any~~  
~~of the preceding claims.~~

5 ~~13. Blister pack according to claim 12, being in the~~  
 form of a wheel-like plate (3; 3') with the unit doses  
 (2; 2') arranged in at least one circle along the  
~~circumference thereof.~~

~~14. Blister pack according to claim 12, being in the~~  
 10 ~~form of a row of unit doses (2; 2') arranged in a~~  
~~flexible loop.~~

11 *Device*

*the preceding*

15. <sup>1</sup> ~~Blister pack according to any of claims 12 to 14,~~  
 wherein the unit dose is a detergent or detergent  
 additive tablet.

<sup>12</sup>

15 <sup>10</sup> ~~16. Blister pack according to any of claims 12 to 14,~~  
 wherein the unit dose is a detergent or detergent  
 additive gel.